Impostor syndrome as a way of understanding gender and careers

Chapter 13

Impostor syndrome as a way of understanding gender and careers

Thomas Calvard

In studying and thinking about the organisations in our societies, we know that diversity in terms of key relations like gender, class, and race can constitute the basis for 'inequality regimes', sets of practices and processes that serve to maintain and reproduce these inequalities (Acker, 2006). The development of employees' careers and leadership capabilities are more specific examples of crucial practices and processes that can adversely affect the experiences of diverse organisational groups in terms of inequality (e.g. Ibarra, Ely and Kolb, 2013; Wyatt and Silvester, 2015). Both inequality regimes in general, and biased career development or leadership experiences in particular, may often be relatively subtle and invisible in nature, as well as difficult to challenge and change (Acker, 2006).

This chapter will focus on gender as something salient, fluid, and complex that is socially constructed, negotiated, and contested through identity and power relations in organisations (Broadbridge and Simpson, 2011). The career development challenges and opportunities faced by women in terms of their identities and self-concepts (e.g. 'Who am I?' 'What can I achieve?'; Phillips and Imhoff, 1997) will be explored by reviewing and developing work on the 'impostor syndrome' or 'impostor phenomenon' - the experiencing of persistent feelings of inadequacy and fraudulence despite evidence of competence and accomplishments (Clance, 1985).

Paying more attention to concepts like impostor syndrome may help to shed better light on women's health and well-being in their careers by placing greater value on understanding a more distinctive set of experiences (Fielden and Cooper, 2001). Arguably, one of the great dilemmas of modern life is how to manage to be both authentic and true to

oneself on one hand, and to conform and fit coherently into wider social contexts on the other (Taylor, 1992). Given that many people spend most of their waking lives in work relative to other domains of life or activity, constructing their identities around their jobs and careers can be a crucial part of figuring out who they are and how they fit into wider social structures (Dutton, Roberts and Bednar, 2010). The gendered nature of careers means that women may experience these journeys and dilemmas of the self in a variety of gender-specific ways, in terms of how they try to get in, get on or ahead, and get out of particular organisational positions and relationships (Broadbridge and Fielden, 2015).

The impostor syndrome is perhaps a fairly neglected concept, or at least one worthy of renewed engagement, given the growing interest in specifying the 'identity work' that goes on in organisations, or the range of activities – creating, repairing, sustaining, revising – that go into the ongoing construction of a coherent and distinctive sense of self, or set of personal and social identities (Brown, 2015). Most identity literature has moved towards recognising the shades of grey or variability that may occur across multiple selves or states of identification. Power relations in organisations can foster a sense of insecurity and anxiety about employee subjectivity, with conformity, resistance, and pretence representing different selves or masks that employees might adopt or put on (Collinson, 2003).

Multiple identities and identifications can vary in depth and interact in various ways (Ashforth, Harrison and Corley, 2008). Conflicts between identities can periodically resurface (Horton, Bayerl and Jacobs, 2014), for example, and resultant states of identification can involve ambivalence or even active dis-identification (Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004). Expanded communication technologies and interconnected global patterns of diversity saturate our sense of self with potential demands to be many different things to different people (Gergen, 1991). We may feel pressured into deception and dishonesty about our identity if it is placed under threat (Leavitt and Sluss, 2015), wonder whether to hide or

disclose less visible aspects of our identities (Clair, Beatty and Maclean, 2005), or be misidentified in various ways when perceived by others (Meister, Jehn and Thatcher, 2014). Identity and image may blur together or exist in an unstable, adaptive relationship, particularly under conditions of uncertainty over competence or organisational change (Alvesson, 2001; Gioia, Schultz and Corley, 2000).

Essentially, much of this identity work is a dialogue between how we see ourselves and the meanings and utterances offered by the outside world (Beech, 2008). In relation to power, this identity work may also constitute a significant struggle or strategic confidence game (Goffman, 1969; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). Politically and philosophically, a great deal may be at stake in terms of which images and identities and self-projects prevail, especially if we consider Bertrand Russell's (2009, p. 203-204) reflection from an essay in 1933 that: "the fundamental cause of the trouble is that in the modern world the stupid are cocksure while the intelligent are full of doubt". Tellingly, the impostor phenomenon was originally observed to be prevalent among high-achieving women that doubted themselves (Clance and Imes, 1978).

In relation to gender and career, women have often found themselves and their career experiences described in terms relating to impostors and feelings of imposture. These experiences have ranged from women feeling isolated as 'tokens' amidst male majorities (Kanter, 1977), through to difficulties in finding role models for professional adaptation (Ibarra, Ely and Kolb, 2013), and occupying precarious, high-risk leadership positions (Ryan and Haslam, 2005). Internationally, non-Western women may feel even more heightened feelings of imposture and self-doubt, as they are rendered doubly 'other' in terms of gender and culture (Metcalfe and Woodhams, 2012). The rest of this chapter therefore focuses on these important identity issues at the intersection of gender, career, and impostor syndrome. Below, the concept and study of impostor syndrome is reviewed, and the chapter concludes

with some summary reflections and recommendations for addressing the impostor syndrome in relation to gender and careers.

IMPOSTOR SYNDROME: THEORIES, CONCEPTS AND EVIDENCE

The phrase impostor syndrome or phenomenon was first coined in 1978 by two clinical psychologists, Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes, in their work with academically and professionally successful women who were unable to internalise or accept their successes (Clance and Imes, 1978). It may manifest in different ways, such as over-working to prevent discovery, placing conformity over authenticity of self-expression, the use of charm to gain approval instead of valuing the role of abilities, and avoiding societal rejection by maintaining forms of feminine, sex-appropriate behaviour (Clance and Imes, 1978). In general, impostor syndrome can be said to describe "the feelings an individual experiences when he or she rightfully achieves a level of success but does not feel deserving of said success" (Clark, Vardeman and Barba, 2014, p. 255).

Given that no particularly precise or standard definition exists, that it is not an officially recognised mental disorder, and that it has a relatively subjective and secretive nature, estimating the prevalence of impostor syndrome can prove challenging (Craddock et al., 2011). No normative data on the impostor syndrome in general populations exists, although based on their research in the 1980s, Harvey and Katz (1986) estimated that about 40 per cent of successful people consider themselves a fraud, irrespective of their gender. Other research in the 1980s estimated from a survey that as many as 70 per cent of men and women from all walks of life have felt like impostors at some point in their careers (Matthews and Clance, 1985). Much of the legacy of this work is broadly rooted in research on academics and librarians, with reference being made to dissonant experiences of either unexpected upward social mobility or unearned privilege, depending on the individual's socio-economic background (Gravois, 2007).

Although the evidence available for clear gender differences on impostor experiences reported by survey scales remains decidedly mixed (Craddock et al., 2011; Kumar and Jagacinski, 2006), it is nonetheless entirely plausible that societal influences around gender, diversity, and high achievement do play some role in moderating impostor-like experiences. For example, depending on the sample or context, achievements may render minority groups feeling more vulnerable or paradoxically disadvantaged, and generally lacking in confidence, than majority groups (Clance and O'Toole, 1988; Kumar and Jagacinski, 2006; Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974).

In terms of the lifespan and a developmental perspective, impostor syndrome has been linked to conflicting, overprotective, and non-supportive parental or family background influences (Langford and Clance, 1993; Want and Kleitman, 2006), as well as being reported by people in relation to their early careers (e.g. tenure track positions) (Laursen, 2008; Matthews and Clance, 1985). The two issues – family and career – can even interact; if a woman enacts a career that is incongruent with parental or family expectations, she is significantly more likely to report experiencing impostor syndrome too (Clance et al., 1995; Hirschfield, 1982).

Kets de Vries (1990) distinguishes between the 'true' impostor who intentionally impersonates others, and the 'neurotic' impostor who feels fraudulent despite genuine accomplishments. The neurotic impostor is likely to feel guilt, fear, and stress in relation to achievements, and be a perfectionist who is sensitive to rejection. Again, developmental influences are traced in the form of parental expectations being inflated or deflated (e.g. relative to a sibling), leading to recurring fears of social rejection in life and even a self-destructive masochistic tendency in unhappily denying or subverting their own accomplishments (Kets de Vries, 1990).

The roots and flavour of most research on impostor syndrome thus tend to be psychoanalytic or psychodynamic in their theories and explanations, which poses interesting challenges and opportunities for related agendas of research and practice. Despite not fitting within the positivist mainstream of organisational and management research, a psychoanalytic perspective has been argued to bring novel and rich insights to issues like gender and social behaviour at work (Fotaki, Long and Schwartz, 2012). Psychoanalysis brings a relatively comprehensive account of individual subjectivity to organisations and management (Fotaki et al., 2012), as well as an in-depth understanding of careers and career development in terms of counselling, desires, tensions, transitions, relationships, and rationalisations (e.g. Buzzanell and D'Enbeau, 2014; Hoyer and Steyaert, 2015). Furthermore, when playing various roles in careers and teams at work, we can tend to differentiate 'deep' psychoanalytic roles according to unconscious symbolic schemas based on notions of good/bad, gender, and hierarchy. These end up further affecting dynamics of power, interest, inclusion, exclusion, and arguably, imposture, as we try to reconcile living up to the roles we are attributed with our more idiosyncratic, inner experiences of self (Moxnes, 1999).

Despite its psychoanalytic roots, scales to measure the cognitive and affective aspects of impostor syndrome have been developed, including the Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) (Chrisman et al., 1995), and the Harvey Impostor Phenomenon Scale (Holmes et al., 1993). Related but distinct traits and states include depression, low self-esteem, social anxiety, and self-monitoring (Chrisman et al., 1995). Since the mid-1990s, a patchwork of research using these scales with specific professional and demographic samples has continued to emerge, linking the impostor syndrome/phenomenon as a personality trait with other traits and outcomes relating to stress, well-being, performance, and general psychological adjustment. It has been studied alongside the trait of perfectionism in shaping

the adjustment of health professionals (Henning, Ey and Shaw, 1998), the personality trait of fear of success (FOS), which was found to be higher among women marketing managers over men (Fried-Buchalter, 1997), and tendencies among college students toward self-handicapping behaviours and feelings of shame (Cowman and Ferrari, 2002). Of the Big Five personality traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism), studies with students suggest associations between impostor feelings, high neuroticism, low conscientiousness, and low extraversion (introversion) (Bernard, Dollinger and Ramaniah, 2002; Ross et al., 2001), with these US findings also being largely replicated in a sample of Korean citizens as well (Chae et al., 1995).

More recent theory has proposed links between over-rewards (e.g. selection for a job role more prestigious than expected) and impostor feelings, with impostor feelings in turn having mixed effects on commitment and positive effects on citizenship behaviours (McDowell, Boyd and Bowler, 2007). Gender concerns remain about impostor syndrome being greater in women in driving them away from top research positions in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects (Lavender, 2013). Debates also remain about whether people truly feel like impostors all the time, even in private, or whether it is much more commonly experienced only under public scrutiny, where the idea of being an impostor is projected as a self-presentation strategy, to appear humbler and make successes appear more striking or noteworthy to others (Spinath, 2011).

Most recently, some research more explicitly linking impostor tendencies to employees and organisations has been conducted. In the wake of economic recession and organisational change, survivors are proposed to be particularly susceptible to impostor feelings, and how successfully they cope with them will be affected by the levels of social support they perceive in their work environment (Whitman and Shanine, 2012). Perhaps the most recent and thorough study to date comes from Vergauwe and colleagues (2015), who

studied impostor tendencies in a sample of 201 Belgian white-collar workers. They found a 20 per cent prevalence rate in their sample, no significant differences by gender, and support for a network of related personality constructs and work outcomes, including lower self-efficacy, job satisfaction and citizenship and higher perfectionism, neuroticism, and continuance commitment (feeling the need to stay with the organisation). These largely negative associations were ameliorated to some extent by greater workplace social support.

In sum, impostor-related feelings appear to be a complex mindset, related to a range of personality and situational factors, with significant implications for employee well-being in relation to how individuals perceive careers and achievements. Despite the inconclusive and conflicting findings regarding a greater prevalence of impostor tendencies among women (Spinath, 2011), the concept has seen a recent renaissance in relation to this gender-related conviction, not least due to its prominent discussion in the well-known book from Facebook Chief Operating Officer (COO) Sheryl Sandberg, *Lean In* (Sandberg, 2013). In her popular account, Sandberg describes impostor syndrome as exacerbating women's self-doubt over their competence in organisations, citing examples of women choosing not to 'sit at the table' (literally, in some cases) of leadership and power, presumably lest they are exposed as an un-feminine fraud (Lebrón, 2015). Women's general lack of confidence and self-esteem at work, difficulty accepting praise, and tendency to rate their performance lower than that of their male colleagues remain significant considerations in relation to the gendered nature of leadership development programmes (Kay and Shipman, 2015; Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002).

In terms of more radical and deliberate acts of imposture across history, many women have resorted to taking on men's identities to gain access to male-dominated professions and careers, sometimes disguising themselves and keeping their true gender a secret for most of their lives (Graham, 2013). Even today, bestselling author of the Harry Potter series, Joanne

Rowling, was urged by her publishers at Bloomsbury to adopt a gender-neutral pen name in order to ensure sales among male readers, and later took an explicitly male pen name, Robert Galbraith, to reinvent herself as an author for the crime genre, developing a fully fictional biography to give it plausibility (Rosenberg, 2013). Many high-profile female celebrities and figures (e.g. Tina Fey, Maya Angelou, Emma Watson, Sheryl Sandberg, Sonia Sotomayor, Linda Kelsey) have openly admitted to experiencing intense impostor feelings during their careers, and it seems likely that wherever women (or men) face uncertainty in the form of public scrutiny of creative, political, and complex expert work, increased feelings of self-doubt can follow in the wake of the many expectations and judgements received (Young, 2011). For instance, at the end of his life, Albert Einstein confided in Queen Elisabeth of Belgium about his unease over the exaggerated esteem his life's work was held in, referring to himself as 'an involuntary swindler' (Holt, 2005). Self-verification theory would suggest that we want others to see us the way we see ourselves, but at other times that can appear risky and we prefer satisfying the conflicting motive of self-enhancement if it means getting ahead or getting along (Kwang and Swann, 2010).

Reasons why women in particular may continue to feel like impostors in the public eye are not too hard to find. For example, Disney recently faced a social media backlash from fans for actively excluding the female protagonist of the new Star Wars *Force Awakens* movie, Rey, from much of its merchandise, only eventually moving to release such toys and products after a significant delay (O'Connor, 2016). The Everyday Sexism project has catalogued over fifty thousand instances of everyday sexism, as experienced and reported in the twenty-first century by women across a range of life domains (e.g. workplace, media, politics, public spaces, education) (Bates, 2015). Many of these modern vignettes touch upon themes of self-doubt, exclusion, insecurity, and prejudice that might contribute to women feeling like they cannot enjoy the relative freedom of being and achieving in the ways they

want without severe judgement or implications – real or imagined – that they are being deviant from some stereotype (i.e. an impostor or misfit) (Bates, 2015). Given that many women clearly achieve a lot in their careers in spite of self-doubt and self-deception, there is still some debate about how dysfunctional impostor tendencies are in moderation (Kelsey, 2015), particularly if they are experienced alongside oscillations toward more constructive tendencies of ambition, reflection, and self-criticism (Young, 2011).

In sum, more systematic research is needed on the full variety of overlapping, intersecting states and experiences surrounding self-doubt, self-deception, and identity work along the lines of gender and other dimensions of diversity, given the range of possible effects and trade-offs between performance and well-being. For example, there are many related biased tendencies in how we see our identities and achievements that may work socially in concert with impostor anxieties. They are too many to outline in full here, but people can equally deem themselves spuriously superior, grandiose, or at least above-average in relation to others (Hoorens, 1993).

Other 'cultural syndromes' may involve envy, resentment, and even sabotage directed towards those outstanding in their successes (Triandis, 1996), as well as status anxiety, and other biased expectations of self and others that may tend toward extremes. In organisations, women may be implicated in an analogous set of cultural syndromes that constitute closely related versions of impostor syndrome. These might include the 'glass cliff' of occupying undesirable leadership positions (Ryan and Haslam, 2005), the 'tempered radical' status of trying to implement organisational change while still needing to conform to much of the status quo (Alston, 2005), and the double bind dilemma of how to achieve success in masculine terms under the influence of incongruent expectations of femininity (Jamieson, 1995).

Understanding these patterns of experience and biased perceptions surrounding identities and achievements in a more integrative way should ultimately help contribute to a correspondingly improved understanding of how intersecting constructions of diversity, such as gender and age, shape various career rhythms and nonlinear patterns (Sabelis and Schilling, 2013).

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter concludes by summarising its review of impostor syndrome, gender and careers, and by outlining three major recommendations directed at organisations, policy makers, government, education providers, and other relevant stakeholder groups and actors.

In the case of addressing impostor syndrome directly, it could be argued that there are not necessarily especially 'hard' tools or interventions for dealing with such private, subjective experiences. Nevertheless, environments for education, development and work need to be best designed so that uncomfortable feelings of imposture and self-doubt can be minimised for the sake of transparency, self-understanding, and well-being, allowing more high-achieving women and men to take off and throw away their figurative masks. In relation to career development issues, a general approach to careers based on 'whole-life' principles where leaders give more positive consideration to work-life balance and non-work factors is likely to be crucial, for ensuring employees don't feel their lives outside work need to be hidden or devalued in relation to their development at work (Litano and Major, 2016).

First, the extant books and popular literature on impostor syndrome offer a wealth of therapeutic tips and suggestions for overcoming impostor syndrome tendencies. Typical suggestions include training individuals to make more balanced, constructive and flexible attributions when reflecting on their relative successes and failures, as well as evaluating and appreciating positive aspects of themselves, their work and relationships to help boost self-esteem and minimize more negative states of fear, guilt and depression (Spinath, 2011).

There is a sense that individuals need to break the habit or cycle of impostor feelings by explicitly recognising and naming it, being self-aware about what triggers it, helping and talking to others with similar feelings, accepting compliments, and revising ideal, perfectionistic views of one's self (Clance, 1985; Harvey and Katz, 1986; Young, 2011). In relation to women and careers, this means hiring and developing employees that can articulate and draw constructively critical attention to gender-biased perceptions of careers, and the tensions between more objective individual performance merits and social or political influences, as well as between the personal and the organisational (Sealy, 2010). This does require active questioning and disruption of traditional definitions of career away from full-time and on-site contributions towards more flexible, results-oriented records of achievement (Cabrera, 2009). Sandberg's (2013) core principles of 'leaning in' for career women may therefore also be helpful in confronting impostor feelings to some extent, in terms of recognising multiple paths towards success, recognition and seniority, and being more open about when stereotypes and passivity may be unnecessarily holding women back in their careers.

Of course, one danger of over-emphasising a 'self-help' narrative is that this might put too much blame and responsibility on women as a group and as individuals, and ironically fuel more self-doubt in some instances. Responsibility falls to others collectively to not be inactive bystanders when others may be suffering from such feelings of pseudo-competence (Clarkson, 1994). High achievers and independent individuals may find areas of common experience here across gender and other diversity dimensions. For instance, men may experience impostor syndrome in other situations that generate feelings of gender role incongruence (e.g. being the only man at a parenting group). In workgroups, women need to feel 'psychologically safe' to embrace the risk of being themselves and owning their achievements and aspirations (Edmondson, 1999). Organisations will need to send out clear

messages to combat status anxiety and obsessive comparisons across employees, which can mean challenging stifling conventions using more enlightened, bohemian, spiritual, and philosophical outlooks on concepts like success, humility, and fulfilment (De Botton, 2005).

Second, and following on from the above, organisations need to allow gender-diverse employees broad career exploration, creative development and self-expression to take the emphasis off impersonating any 'one best way' or 'phantom male norm' of enacting a career (Billing, 2011). Talent management or career policies should thus consider moving away from linear tracks and ladders towards trellis and jungle gym metaphors, where horizontal as well as vertical career and education paths can be pursued that better match diversity to talent risks (World Economic Forum, 2011), potentially minimising feelings of doubt, imposture and regret at having taken a wrong turn in a journey of lifelong learning. To further allay impostor anxiety, future work skills, identity work, and career transitions should be approached with an emphasis on play and humour (Holmes, 2006; Ibarra and Petriglieri, 2010; Statler, Roos and Victor, 2009), two concepts which can help with envisioning alternative views of our personal and collective identity. This could be achieved through a series of identity-themed workshops bringing together different interest groups and communities of practice within and between organisations to challenge and deconstruct overly-rigid cultures, stereotypes and structures (e.g. patriarchal) that coerce people into identity bureaucracy and conformity, rather than enabling diverse achievements (Adler and Borys, 1996; Haslam, Eggins and Reynolds, 2003). Safer strengths for a workplace career culture to put at its centre would be values of authenticity and self-disclosure, and in their notable study of what makes 'the best workplace on earth', Goffee and Jones (2013) found themes to this effect, as somewhere that 'lets me be myself', 'tells me what's really going on', and 'doesn't hinder me with stupid rules'.

Third, and finally, given the roots and origin of the impostor syndrome concept, organisations and other stakeholders can potentially benefit from taking a psychoanalytic perspective on their agendas and interventions at various levels. Such perspectives have strong links to understanding careers, counselling, and organisations in terms of unconscious influences, desires, relationships, needs for connection/empathy, emotion regulation, and coping strategies (e.g. Flum, 2001; Gabriel and Carr, 2002). Gendered career issues, diversity and ambivalent emotions may be difficult to talk about in public in organisations (Lowe, Mills and Mullen 2002), yet if left unaddressed continue to be collectively experienced in terms of fear, unease, or despair (Gabriel, 2012; Schwabenland and Tomlinson, 2015).

The impostor syndrome is a fairly specific issue, but it is also versatile in that it can be relatively easily bundled in with other agendas relating to careers, diversity and change in education and organisations, in terms of social support, wellness or well-being, mental health, organisation development (OD), coaching, and more. Policies and practices might seek to identify psychological contract issues for job roles where there is likely to be intense public scrutiny and image-identity dissonance, and thus more explicitly recognising the demands, control, resources and characteristics of jobs that create intense impostor feelings (e.g. undercover work, public-facing work, gender-stereotyped work). Policies could also try to reach out and educate to foster understanding of archetypal forms of impostor experience – workaholics, compulsive worriers, shrinking violets, charmers, unsung heroes, recluses, and disengaged or disillusioned sceptics (Harvey and Katz, 1986). At a more extreme level, perverse incentives or contradictory institutional logics may cause women (and men) to feel conflicted and dissonant about taking on certain aspects of career identities that could ultimately lead to escalated commitments, ethical breakdowns and costly, disastrous decisions (Bazerman and Tenbrunsel, 2011).

Going forward, leaders and figures higher up in organisations of both genders need to role model, talking openly about their own insecurities and doubts (Burkeman, 2013). While this might seem unrealistic or idealistic in many organisational cultures characterised by daunting inequalities, power and politics, the relatable human experience of feeling like an impostor is arguably one way of opening up conversations around the idea that there is 'no one best way' to lead or manage organisational change (Burnes, 1996). Such organisations need to ensure people feel safe to express themselves if they are to fully unlock the strengths of their diversity. In doing so, they can foster stronger developmental relationships, serving as friendly, reassuring reality checks to women uncertain of how to proceed candidly and authentically in their careers, encouraging them to pursue and celebrate distinctive accomplishments with genuine self-confidence (Sanford et al., 2015).

REFERENCES

Acker, J. (2006), 'Inequality regimes: Gender, class, and race in organizations', *Gender & Society,* **20** (4), 441-464.

Adler, P.S. and B. Borys (1996), 'Two types of bureaucracy: Enabling and coercive', *Administrative Science Quarterly,* **41** (1), 61-89.

Alston, J.A. (2005), 'Tempered radicals and servant leaders: Black females persevering in the superintendency', *Educational Administration Quarterly,* **41**(4), 675-688.

Alvesson, M. (2001), 'Knowledge work: Ambiguity, image and identity', *Human Relations,* **54** (7), 863-886.

Ashforth, B.E., S.H. Harrison and K.G. Corley (2008), 'Identification in organizations: An examination of four fundamental questions', *Journal of Management,* **34** (3), 325-374.

Bates, Laura (2015), *Everyday Sexism,* London, UK: Simon & Schuster.

Bazerman, M.H. and A. Tenbrunsel (2011), 'Ethical breakdowns', *Harvard Business Review,*

89 (4), 58-65.

Beech, N. (2008), 'On the nature of dialogic identity work', *Organization*, **15** (1), 51-74.

Bernard, N.S., S.J. Dollinger and N.V. Ramaniah (2002), 'Applying the big five personality factors to the impostor phenomenon', *Journal of Personality Assessment*, **78** (2), 321-333.

Billing, Y.D. (2011), 'Are women in management victims of the phantom of the male norm?',

Gender, Work & Organization, **18** (3), 298-317.

Broadbridge, Adelina and Sandra Fielden (eds.) (2015), *Handbook of Gendered Careers in Management: Getting in, Getting on, Getting Out*, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Broadbridge, A. and R. Simpson (2011), '25 years on: Reflecting on the past and looking to the future in gender and management research', *British Journal of Management*, **22** (3), 470-483.

Brown, A.D. (2015), 'Identities and identity work in organizations', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, **17** (1), 20-40.

Burkeman, O. (2013), 'This column will change your life: Do you feel like a fraud?', accessed 15 January 2016 at http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/nov/09/impostor-syndrome-oliver-burkeman

Burnes, B. (1996), 'No such thing as…a "one best way" to manage organizational change', *Management Decision*, **34** (10), 11-18.

Buzzanell, P.M. and S. D'Enbeau (2014), 'Intimate, ambivalent and erotic mentoring: Popular culture and mentor-mentee relational processes in Mad Men', *Human Relations*, **67** (6), 695-714.

Cabrera, E.F. (2009), 'Protean organizations: Reshaping work and careers to retain female talent', *Career Development International,* **14** (2), 186-201.

Chae, J., R.L. Piedmont, B.K Estadt and R.J. Wicks (1995), 'Personological evaluation of Clance's Imposter Phenomenon scale in a Korean sample', *Journal of Personality Assessment,* **65** (3), 468-485.

Clark, M., K. Vardeman and S. Barba (2014), 'Perceived inadequacy: A study of the imposter phenomenon among college and research librarians', *College & Research Libraries,* **75** (3), 255-271.

Chrisman, S.M., W.A. Pieper, P.R. Clance, C.L. Holland and C. Glickauf-Hughes (1995), 'Validation of the Clance Imposter Phenomenon scale', *Journal of Personality Assessment,* **65** (3), 456-467.

Clair, J.A., J.E. Beatty and T.L. Maclean (2005), 'Out of sight but not out of mind: Managing invisible social identities in the workplace', *Academy of Management Review,* **30** (1), 78-95.

Clance, Pauline Rose (1985), *The Impostor Phenomenon: Overcoming the Fear That Haunts Your Success,* Atlanta, GA: Peachtree Publishers.

Clance, P.R. and S.A. Imes (1978), 'The imposter phenomenon in high achieving women: Dynamics and therapeutic intervention', *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice,* **15** (3), 241-247.

Clance, P.R. and M.A. O'Toole (1988), 'The imposter phenomenon: An internal barrier to empowerment and achievement', *Women & Therapy,* **6** (3), 51-64.

Clance, P.R., D. Dingman, S.L. Reviere and D.R. Stober (1995), 'Impostor phenomenon in an interpersonal/social context', *Women & Therapy,* **16** (4), 79-96.

Clarkson, Petruska (1994), *The Achilles Syndrome: Overcoming the Secret Fear of Failure,* Dorset, UK: Element Books.

Collinson, D.L. (2003), 'Identities and insecurities: Selves at work', *Organization*, **10** (3), 527-547.

Cowman, S.E. and J.R. Ferrari (2002), 'Am I for real? Predicting impostor tendencies from self-handicapping and affective components', *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal,* **30** (2), 119-125.

Craddock, S., M. Birnbaum, K. Rodriguez, C. Cobb and S. Zeeh (2011), 'Doctoral students and the impostor phenomenon: Am I smart enough to be here?', *Journal of Student Affairs: Research and Practice*, **48** (4), 429-442.

De Botton, Alain (2005), *Status Anxiety,* London: Penguin.

Dutton, J.E., L.M. Roberts and J. Bednar (2010), 'Pathways for positive identity construction at work: Four types of positive identity and the building of social resources', *Academy of Management Review*, **35** (2), 265-293.

Edmondson, A. (1999), 'Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **44** (2), 350-383.

Fielden, S.L. and C.L. Cooper (2001), 'Women managers and stress: A critical analysis', *Equal Opportunities International*, **20** (1/2), 3-16.

Flum, H. (2001), 'Relational dimensions in career development', *Journal of Vocational Behavior,* **59** (1), 1-16.

Fotaki, M., S. Long and H.S. Schwartz (2012), 'What can psychoanalysis offer organization studies today? Taking stock of current developments and thinking about future directions', *Organization Studies*, **33** (9), 1105-1120.

Fried-Buchalter, S. (1997), 'Fear of success, fear of failure, and the imposter phenomenon among male and female marketing managers', *Sex Roles*, **37** (11), 847-859.

Gabriel, Y. (2012), 'Organizations in a state of darkness: Towards a theory of organizational miasma', *Organization Studies*, **33** (9), 1137-1152.

Gabriel, Y. and A. Carr (2002), 'Organizations, management and psychoanalysis: An overview', *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, **17** (5), 348-365.

Gergen, Kenneth (1991), *The Saturated Self*, New York: Basic Books.

Gioia, D.A., M. Schultz and K.G. Corley (2000), 'Organizational identity, image, and adaptive instability', *Academy of Management Review*, **25** (1), 63-81.

Goffee, R. and G. Jones (2013), 'Creating the best workplace on earth', *Harvard Business Review*, **91**(5), 98-106.

Goffman, Erving (1969), *Strategic Interaction*, New York: Ballantine.

Graham, Ian (2013), *The Ultimate Book of Impostors*, London: Thistle Publishing.

Gravois, J. (2007), 'You're not fooling anyone', *Chronicle of Higher Education*, **54** (11), A1.

Harvey, Joan and Cynthia Katz (1986), *If I'm so Successful, why do I Feel Like a Fake? The Impostor Phenomenon*, New York: Pocket Books.

Haslam, S.A., R.A. Eggins and K.J. Reynolds (2003), 'The ASPIRe model: Actualizing social and personal identity resources to enhance organizational outcomes', *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, **76** (1), 83-113.

Henning, K., S. Ey and D. Shaw (1998), 'Perfectionism, the impostor phenomenon and psychological adjustment in medical, dental, nursing and pharmacy students', *Medical Education*, **32** (5), 456-464.

Hirschfield, M.M. (1982), 'The impostor phenomenon in successful career women', Doctoral Dissertation, Fordham University.

Holmes, J. (2006), 'Sharing a laugh: Pragmatic aspects of humor and gender in the workplace', *Journal of Pragmatics*, **38** (1), 26-50.

Holmes, S.W., L. Kertay, L.B. Adamson, C.L. Holland and P.R. Clance (1993), 'Measuring the impostor phenomenon: A comparison of Clance's IP scale and Harvey's I-P scale', *Journal of Personality Assessment*, **60** (1), 48-59.

Holt, J. (2005), 'Time bandits: What were Einstein and Gödel talking about?' *The New Yorker*, accessed 20 January 2016 at http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/02/28/time-bandits-2

Hoorens, V. (1993), 'Self-enhancement and superiority biases in social comparison', *European Review of Social Psychology*, **4** (1), 113-139.

Horton, K.E., P.S. Bayerl and G. Jacobs (2014), 'Identity conflicts at work: An integrative framework', *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, **35** (S1), S6-S22.

Hoyer, P. and C. Steyaert (2015), 'Narrative identity construction in times of career change: Taking note of unconscious desires', *Human Relations*, **68** (12), 1837-1863.

Ibarra, H., R. Ely and D. Kolb (2013), 'Women rising: The unseen barriers', *Harvard Business Review*, **91** (9), 60-67.

Ibarra, H. and J.L. Petriglieri (2010), 'Identity work and play', *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, **23** (1), 10-25.

Jamieson, Kathleen Hall (1995), *Beyond the Double Bind: Women and leadership*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kanter, R.M. (1977), 'Some effects of proportions on group life: Skewed sex ratios and responses to token women', *American Journal of Sociology*, **82** (5), 965-990.

Kay, Katty and Claire Shipman (2015), *The Confidence Code: The Science and Art of Self-Assurance – What Women Should Know*, New York: HarperCollins.

Kelsey, L. (2015), 'Women, when will we get over ourselves?' *The Telegraph*, accessed 20 January 2016 at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11780534/emma-watson-imposter-syndrome-linda-kelsey.html

Kets de Vries, M.F.R (1990), 'The impostor syndrome: Developmental and societal issues', *Human Relations*, **43** (7), 667-686.

Kreiner, G.E. and B.E. Ashforth (2004), 'Evidence toward an expanded model of

organizational identification', *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, **25** (1), 1-27.

Kumar, S. and C.M. Jagacinski (2006), 'Imposters have goals too: The imposter phenomenon and its relationship to achievement goal theory', *Personality and Individual Differences*, **40** (1), 147-157.

Kwang, T. and W.B. Swann (2010), 'Do people embrace praise even when they feel unworthy? A review of critical tests of self-enhancement versus self-verification', *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, **14** (3), 263-280.

Langford, J. and P.R. Clance (1993), 'The imposter phenomenon: Recent research findings regarding dynamics, personality and family patterns and their implications for treatment', *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, **30** (3), 495-501.

Lavender, G. (2013), 'Impostor syndrome shown to drive women away from physics', *Physics World*, **26** (10), 10.

Lebrón, M. (2016), 'Book review: Lean In: Women, work, and the will to lead', *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, **15** (1), 200-203.

Laursen, L. (2008), 'No, you're not an impostor', *Science*, accessed 20 January 2016 at http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2008/02/no-youre-not-impostor

Leavitt, K. and D.M. Sluss (2015), 'Lying for who we are: An identity-based model of workplace dishonesty', *Academy of Management Review*, **40** (4), 587-610.

Litano, M.L. and D.A. Major (2016), 'Facilitating a whole-life approach to career development: The role of organizational leadership', *Journal of Career Development*, **43** (1), 52-65.

Lowe, L., A. Mills and J. Mullen (2002), 'Gendering the silences: Psychoanalysis, gender and organization studies', *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, **17** (5), 422-434.

Maccoby, Eleanore and Carol Jacklin (1974), *The Psychology of Sex Differences*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Matthews, M. and P.R. Clance (1985), 'Treatment of the impostor phenomenon in psychotherapy clients', *Psychotherapy in Private Practice*, **3** (1), 71-81.

McDowell, W.C., N.G. Boyd and W.M. Bowler (2007), 'Overreward and the impostor phenomenon', *Journal of Managerial Issues*, **19** (1), 95-110.

Meister, A., K.A. Jehn and S.M.B.Thatcher (2014), 'Feeling misidentified: The consequences of internal identity asymmetries for individuals at work', *Academy of Management Review*, **39** (4), 488-512.

Metcalfe, B.D. and C. Woodhams (2012), 'Introduction: new directions in gender, diversity and organization theorizing – re-imagining feminist post-colonialism, transnationalism and geographies of power', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, **14** (2), 123-140.

Moxnes, P. (1999), 'Deep roles: Twelve primordial roles of mind and organization', *Human Relations*, **52** (11), 1427-1444.

O'Connor, C. (2016), 'After outcry, Disney launches new Rey toys for Star Wars fans', *Forbes*, accessed 21 January 2016 at http://www.forbes.com/sites/clareoconnor/2016/01/12/after-outcry-disney-launches-new-rey-toys-for-star-wars-fans/#58f3368e3152

Philips, S.D. and A.R. Imhoff (1997), 'Women and career development: A decade of research', *Annual Review of Psychology*, **48**, 31-59.

Rosenberg, A. (2013), 'Stop hiding, J.K. Rowling', *Slate*, accessed 21 January 2016 at http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2013/07/15/j_k_rowling_used_a_male_pseudonym_to_publish_the_cuckoo_s_calling_stop_hiding.html

Ross, S.R., J. Stewart, M. Mugge and B. Fultz (2001), 'The imposter phenomenon, achievement dispositions, and the five factor model', *Personality and Individual Differences*, **31** (8), 1347-1355.

Russell, Bertrand (2009), *Mortals and Others*, New York: Routledge.

Ryan, M.K. and S.A. Haslam (2005), 'The glass cliff: Evidence that women are over-represented in precarious leadership positions', *British Journal of Management*, **16** (2), 81-90.

Sabelis, I. and E. Schilling (2013), 'Frayed careers: Exploring rhythms of working lives', *Gender, Work & Organization*, **20** (2), 127-132.

Sandberg, Sheryl (2013), *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Sanford, A.A., E.M. Ross, S.J. Blake and R.L. Cambiano (2015), 'Finding courage and confirmation: Resisting impostor feelings through relationships with mentors, romantic partners, and other women in leadership', *Advancing Women in Leadership*, **35**, 31-41.

Schwabenland, C. and F. Tomlinson (2015), 'Shadows and light: Diversity management as phantasmagoria', *Human Relations*, **68** (12), 1913-1936.

Sealy, R. (2010), 'Changing perceptions of meritocracy in senior women's careers', *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, **25** (3), 184-197.

Spinath, B. (2011), 'Great pretenders: People who feel their success is undeserved', *Scientific American Mind*, accessed 20 January 2016 at http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/great-pretenders/

Statler, M., J. Roos and B. Victor (2009), 'Ain't misbehavin': Taking play seriously in organizations', *Journal of Change Management*, **9** (1), 87-107.

Sveningsson, S. and M. Alvesson (2003), 'Managing managerial identities: Organizational fragmentation, discourse and identity struggle', *Human Relations*, **56** (10), 1163-1193.

Taylor, Charles (1992), *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University

Press.

Triandis, H.C. (1996), 'The psychological measurement of cultural syndromes', *American Psychologist*, **51** (4), 407-415.

Vergauwe, J., B. Wille, M. Feys, F. De Fruyt and F. Anseel (2015), 'Fear of being exposed: The trait-relatedness of the impostor phenomenon and its relevance in the work context', *Journal of Business and Psychology*, **30** (3), 565-581.

Vinnicombe, S. and V. Singh (2002), 'Women-only management training: An essential part of women's leadership development', *Journal of Change Management*, **3** (4), 294-306.

Want, J. and S. Kleitman (2006), 'Imposter phenomenon and self-handicapping: Links with parenting styles and self-confidence', *Personality and Individual Differences*, **40** (5), 961-971.

Whitman, M.V. and K.K. Shanine (2012), 'Revisiting the impostor phenomenon: How individuals cope with feelings of being in over their heads', *Research in Occupational Stress and Well-Being*, **10**, 177-212.

World Economic Forum (2011), *Global Talent Risk – Seven Responses*, accessed 20 January 2016 at http://www3.weforum.org/docs/PS_WEF_GlobalTalentRisk_Report_2011.pdf

Wyatt, M. and J. Silvester (2015), 'Reflections on the labyrinth: Investigating black and minority ethnic leaders' career experiences', *Human Relations*, **68** (8), 1243-1269.

Young, Valerie (2011), *The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women: Why Capable People Suffer from the Impostor Syndrome and How to Thrive in Spite of it*, New York: Crown Business.